

# **Michigan's Public Assistance Programs An Overview**

House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors

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## Programs and Acronyms

- **FAP** – Food Assistance Program. Also known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- **FIP** – Family Independence Program - Cash assistance.
- **CDC** – Child Development and Care Program
- **MA** - Medicaid
- **RAP** – Refugee Assistance Program
- **SDA** - State Disability Assistance
- **SSI** - Supplemental Security Income
- **LIHEAP** - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program & **HHC** – Home Heating Credit
- **SER** – State Emergency Relief
- **Adult Services** – Independent Living, Community Placement and Protective Services



## Benefit Determination

- Each public assistance program has **unique income and eligibility guidelines**.
- Guidelines are provided by **FNS, HHS, CMS, SSA, other federal agencies and Michigan statutes**.
- Each state must develop a **State Plan** for implementation and administration of most programs.
- DHS staff use an **integrated eligibility technology system called Bridges** to determine benefit eligibility.



## Monthly Averages FY'2011

FIP, FAP, SDA, CDC, SER

Program	Cases	Recipients	Payments
FIP	86,342	235,427	\$34,601,822
FAP	954,303	1,910,965	\$257,073,629
SDA	10,762	10,855	\$2,726,147
CDC	28,264	52,953	\$13,860,365
SER	30,402	N/A	\$11,907,953
Unduplicated Total	975,268	1,944,829	\$320,169,916

\*From DHS Trend Report - [http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458\\_7696\\_10831---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458_7696_10831---,00.html)



## FAP - Food Assistance Program

- The **U.S.D.A. funds 100%** of the benefits of this program.
- State and federal governments share administrative costs.
- Eligibility depends on the financial and non-financial criteria of all members of the household group.
- FAP benefits can be used to buy **eligible food** at any **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)** authorized retail food store or approved meal provider.



## FIP - Family Independence Program

- The main goal of FIP is to help **families become self-supporting and independent.**
- FIP is **temporary cash assistance for low-income families** with minor children and pregnant women.
- FIP helps pay for living expenses such as **rent, heat, utilities, clothing, food and personal care items.**
- FIP applicants and recipients may be assigned to **Jobs, Education and Training (JET)** for assistance in finding a job or to develop needed job skills.



## CDC – Child Development & Care Program

- DHS' CDC Program may provide **payment for child care services** for qualifying families.
- A person may be eligible for CDC benefits if they need child care for:
  - *employment*
  - *high school completion*
  - *family preservation (treatment activity for health or social conditions)*



## MA - Medicaid

- DHS determines MA eligibility.
- DCH is responsible for all MA policy related issues.
- The federal agency **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** provide MA guidelines to the states.
- There are currently more than **1.9M** Michigan citizens receiving MA.
- There are **31** separate MA programs.



## RAP - Refugee Assistance Program

- RAP is a **federal program**.
- Temporary RAP **cash assistance** and **medical aid** is available to refugees for up to 8 months after their entry into the U.S. employment services if they are not eligible for FIP.
- **Health screenings and foster care services** for unaccompanied minors are other DHS services available to refugees.



## SDA – State Disability Assistance

- SDA is **cash assistance for disabled adults**.
- A person is considered **disabled** for SDA purposes if s/he:
  - receives other disability-related benefits or
  - resides in a special facility (such as a licensed Adult Foster Care Home), or
  - is certified by DHS medical consultants as unable to work for at least 90 days.
  - May also be provided to the caretaker of a disabled person or to a person age 65 or older.
  - An SDA group can be either a single person or spouses who live together.



## SSI – Supplemental Security Income

- SSI is a **cash benefit to needy persons who are aged (at least 65), blind or disabled**.
- SSI is administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- States are **required to supplement** the federal benefit with state funds but have discretion in the amount.
- In MI, SSI benefits include a basic federal benefit plus an additional \$14 (the minimum allowed by federal mandate).
- **SSA issues the federal benefit to all SSI recipients.**
- Cash assistance (FIP or SDA) received while SSI cases are pending are **reimbursed to the State** when SSI is approved.
- Initially, a lump sum check, after reimbursement is deducted, may be issued for retroactive benefits.
- Once approved SSA issues **SSI benefits monthly**.



## LIHEAP & HHC

- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):**

LIHEAP is federal money given to each state to assist low-income families with energy costs. In Michigan, the LIHEAP block grant is used for the following programs:

- *Home Heating Credit (HHC)*
- *Energy Related State Emergency Relief (SER)*
- *Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)*

- **Home Heating Credit (HHC):**

The HHC is available to all low-income households. The Michigan Department of Treasury determines eligibility and makes the payments. It is not necessary to file a state income tax return to receive the HHC. An individual may apply for the HHC only. Eligibility is based on income, number of exemptions and household heating costs.



## SER- State Emergency Relief

- The **SER Program** provides immediate help to individuals and families facing conditions of extreme hardship or for emergencies that threaten health and safety.





## SER Cont.

- **SER Eligibility is based on:**
  - demonstration of immediate need (shut off notice), or
  - declared need for a deliverable fuel (such as fuel oil), or
  - verified need for energy related home repair, **and**
  - income **and** assets.
- **SER Payments include the following allowances and restrictions:**
  - Heating fuel has an annual cap depending on the fuel type. The maximum payment may change based on available funding.
  - Energy-related home repairs - \$1500 lifetime limit/household
  - Home ownership services - \$2000 lifetime limit/household
  - Water & other utility assistance - \$175/year
  - Rental assistance/relocation expenses – Max based on group size
  - Indigent burials - \$700
  - Food - \$1.50/day/person for a max of 15 days
  - Migrant hospitalization- based on MA rates



## Adult Services

- The goal of the Adult Services Program is to protect, encourage independence and advocate for frail and vulnerable adults in Michigan.
- Local office Adult Protective Services investigators protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Independent Living Specialists support adults with self-care limitations by authorizing services enabling them to maintain their dignity and remain in the least restrictive setting possible.
- Adult Community Placement Specialists also monitor the care and well being of adults who require supervision in foster care settings.



## Applying for Public Benefits

- DHS 1171 Form
- **MiBridges** Online Application for FAP and SER - <https://www.mibridges.michigan.gov/access/>
- DHS and DTMB are finalizing a contract **for the expansion of MiBridges to include all benefit programs.**
- The MiBridges expansion is being funded almost entirely by **private foundation dollars.**



## MICHIGAN BRIDGE CARD

- FAP benefits and/or cash assistance benefits (FIP, SDA) are accessed via the Michigan Bridge Card.



- Each type of assistance is in a separate account and can only be used on approved purchases or payments.



## Suggested Resources

- **DHS Public Site – Trend Report & Green Book –**  
<http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458--,00.html>
- **Welfare Peer TA Upcoming Webinar on Jan. 26, 2011 at 2 pm EST –**  
TANF and EITC: Creating Additional Opportunities for ARRA Funded  
Subsidized Employment Participants  
<http://peerta.act.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=viewWebinarList&nav=19>
- **FIP, FAP, RAP Work Rules & Penalties -**  
[http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5453\\_5526-13946--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5453_5526-13946--,00.html)
- **FNS Homepage -** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>
- **HHS Homepage -** <http://www.hhs.gov/>
- **CMS Homepage -** <http://www.cms.gov/>



## Questions & Answers

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Thank You





**The Department of Human Services  
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)  
Michigan's Bridge Card**

**EBT** is an innovative vehicle to delivering government benefits by combining the best of electronic technologies. Instead of paper food stamps and paper checks, Department of Human Services (DHS) clients are issued a debit card to purchase food products and access cash benefits. This debit card is called the **Michigan Bridge Card**. The federal government has mandated that all states use EBT for food assistance benefits.

Approximately 4,400 retailers and over 4,000 ATM's are available for Bridge Card use within the state. The level of participation by retailers and financial institutions has been vital to our success. Four years ago also began the use of the Bridge Card at qualified Farmer's Markets and Farm Stands. Additionally, there are a limited number of restaurants that accept the Bridge Card from the qualifying clients of the homeless, disabled, and senior citizens.

Affiliated Computer Systems (ACS) is the current vendor for the Bridge Card. The ACS contract is in place until May 2013.

Training for Bridge Card use includes the provision of written materials to every DHS client as they become eligible for assistance, and the use of Bridge Card videos in county offices. A toll free help phone line is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is located on the back of the Bridge Card.

